THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF'S THOUGHTS ON THE FRENCH INVASION,

ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE.*

AT no period ſince I have been your Dioceſan, have I interfered with your political opinions, or ſhewn the leaſt anxiety to direct them to the ſupport of any particular Party in the State. Had I followed a contrary conduct, I ſhould have acted in a manner unbecoming the nature of my office; ill-ſuited to the character I wiſh to maintain, and diſreſpectful to yourſelves. I have unqueſtionably my political principles, as well as other men have theirs; and, how unfaſhionable ſoever they may have become, I have never ſcrupled, and never ſhall ſcruple, to confeſs that thoſe on which the Revolution was founded, and the preſent reigning Family ſeated on the Throne of theſe Kingdoms, are, in my judgment, principles beſt calculated to protect the liberty and property of the ſubject, and to ſecure the honour and happineſs of the Sovereign.

You will not, I think, be guilty of a breach of Chriſtian Charity in the uſe of even harſh language, when you explain to them the cruelties which the French have uſed in every country they have invaded; for no language can reach the atrocity of the fact. They every where promiſe protection to the poorer ſort, and they every where ſtrip the pooreſt of every thing they poſſeſs; they plunder their cottages, and they ſet them on fire when the plunder is exhauſted; they torture the owners to diſcover their wealth, and they put them to death when they have none to diſcover; they violate females of all ages; they inſult the hoary head, and trample on all the decencies of life. This is no exaggerated picture: whoever has read the account of the proceedings of the French in Swabia, in Holland, in Italy, in Switzerland, knows that it is not.—And can there be men in Great Britain, of ſo baſe a temper, ſo maddened by malignity, ſo cankered by envy, ſo beſotted by folly, ſo ſtupified as to their own ſafety, as to abet the deſigns of ſuch an enemy? It is ſaid there are ſuch men; but I have too firm a confidence in the general good ſenſe of the People of Great Britain, to believe, that ſuch men are either many in number, or reſpectable for character, or formidable for connection. The men of this Principality, at leaſt, have nobly ſhewn, in a late inſtance, that they inherit the ſpirit of their anceſtors, and have too ardent a love of their country to ſubmit to a foreign yoke, under whatever ſpecious promiſes of ſupporting the Rights of Men, of introducing Liberty and Equality, the Invaders may attempt to deceive them.

What are theſe Rights of Men, this Liberty, this Equality, of which every man hath heard ſo much, and of which few have any proper conception?—Let us ſee what they are in France itſelf.—There no man has any Right in his Perſon, or in his Property; both are abſolutely at the diſpoſal of the few Perſons who have uſurped the Government—There no Man has any Liberty, except the Liberty of ſubmitting to the worſt of Slavery; for what Slavery can be worſe than that of being ſubject to Laws which are perpetually changed, according to the caprice of the Ruling Faction?—*Ubi jus incertum, ibi jus nullum.*

Are the French coming hither to enrich the nation? Will they pay attention to the poor of this country, when they have ſo many thouſands of infinitely poorer perſons in their own?—Will they reward their ſeditious adherents amongſt us?—Yes, they will reward them, as all hiſtory informs us ſuch Traitors have ever been rewarded—they will reward them with contempt, pillage, beggary, ſlavery, and death. The nation will be ruined by exorbitant impoſitions,—our Naval Power will be deſtroyed,—our Commerce transferred to France,—our Lands will be divided, not amongſt thoſe who wickedly covet their neighbours' goods, but amongſt French Soldiers, who will be every where ſtationed as the Roman Soldiers were of old, to awe the People, and collect the Taxes,—the flower of our youth will be compelled to ſerve in foreign countries, to promote the wicked projects of French ambition,—Great Britain will be made an appendage to continental Deſpotiſm.

I would ſay to the moſt violent Democrat in the kingdom,—Suppoſe the buſineſs done; after Seas of Blood have been ſhed, Millions of Lives loſt, Towns plundered, Villages burned, the Royal Family exterminated, and unutterable calamity has been endured by perſons of all ranks;—after all this has been done, what Advantages will you have obtained beyond what you now poſſeſs? Will your Property be better protected? Will your perſonal Liberty be more reſpected? Will our Code of Juriſprudence be improved? Will our Laws be more impartially adminiſtered? Quite the contrary of all this now takes place in France. I do not ſay that when things are ſettled there, the preſent wretched condition of its inhabitants will be continued, and I hope it will not; but I am ſincerely of opinion, that few of us will live to ſee ſuch a ſyſtem eſtabliſhed in France, as will procure to its inhabitants half the bleſſings which our anceſtors have enjoyed, which we do enjoy, and which it is our intereſt to take care that our Poſterity ſhall enjoy, under the Conſtitution of Great Britain.

* From "A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceſe of Llandaff, in June, 1798, by R. Watſon, D. D. F. R. S. Biſhop of Llandaff."

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*** *JAMES ASPERNE reſpectfully informs Noblemen, Magiſtrates, and Gentlemen, that he keeps ready aſſorted, a Collection of all the Loyal Papers that have been, or will be, publiſhed. He at the ſame Time takes the Liberty of ſuggeſting, that they would do their Country an eſſential Service, if they would order a few Sets of their reſpective Bookſellers, and cauſe them to be diſperſed in the Villages where they reſide, that the Inhabitants may be convinced of the perfidious Deſigns of BONAPARTE againſt this Country; and to expoſe the Malignant, Treacherous, and cruel Conduct of the* CORSICAN USURPER *to the various Nations that have fallen beneath his tyrannical Yoke.*